TWO FAIR FRIENDS.

BY ELIZA F. POLLARD,

Author of "Robert Aske," "Avice," etc., etc.

"'I feel sometimes as if I were dreaming,' he said." *p.* 163

CHAPTER IX.

"THE BUTTERFLY."

"GOOD-BYE, Aunt Bessie; good-bye, Miriam, mind you keep up my choir. I shall be back at Easter," and Sylvia's bright young face, full of life and hope, nodded and smiled as the train steamed out of Porton Station, leaving her two best friends standing on the platform rather sore at heart at her evident delight at being off, and at her complete indifference to those who had nevertheless learnt to care for her.

"I really thought she loved me a little," murmured Miriam, her eyes full of tears.

"I am afraid she loves no one so well as herself at present, poor child," said Miss Bessie. "Come, Miriam, we must not be down-hearted. Gilbert will be off soon, and then we shall have to fall back on our own resources, after all the excitement of the last few months. It is very strange, of course, I cannot approve of Sylvia; still, she has brightened us up wonderfully."

"Indeed she has," answered Miriam. "I shall miss her dreadfully, but I must not let father know. He was watching me this morning to see if I was fretting."

"Yes, you must be careful," answered Miss Bessie. "He loves you so dearly, it would grieve him if he thought he was not all in all to you."

"And yet surely it cannot be intended for us to love but one person in the world, even though that one be the very dearest and best of fathers?" said Miriam.

"Not generally, perhaps," answered Miss Bessie. "But few fathers have been so devoted as yours, Miriam; you must remember that always."

"Yes, I do," she answered; "but, still, I cannot help loving and missing my friends."

A few days later Gilbert left them to complete his university career, and then to prepare for his ordination; after which he hoped to be sent out to some mission station. He had applied for the East Africa Mission, but could not, of course, know whether he would be accepted.

"You will come back, and spend the summer with us," the Vicar had said at parting.

"I shall be very glad to do so," he had answered, and in due time he re-appeared.

"I have come to work," he said, "for the next three months. I find that a missionary needs to know many things of which I am ignorant."

"What things?" asked Miriam.

"Wait a little; you will see," he answered, smiling. "How's Sylvia? Have you seen her lately?"

"No," answered Miriam, sadly. "At Easter she was invited to stay with friends, and afterwards she wrote to the Doctor that she was going with these same friends to study in Paris at the Conservatoire; she should get on there much faster than at the Academy, she said, where she was hampered by rules, and that it would be far less expensive. She gave the name of a *pension* she was going to, and asked for her allowance to be sent to her there. Of course, we were all very disappointed. The Doctor made inquiries, and found the place she had gone to with her friends was really quite respectable, so he allowed her to remain there."

"Pretty cool, I must say," said Gilbert.

"Yes, I thought so too," answered Miriam. "But father

says the Australian and American girls are brought up so independently that it is not as bad in Sylvia as it seems, or would be if she were English born. Still, the Miss Nunns have been very grieved."

"I am sure they must have been," answered Gilbert. "What a perfectly undisciplined nature it is! I am afraid she will require a severe lesson before she is tamed."

"And yet I thought you liked her, Gilbert?" said Miriam, with a smile.

"Of course, I did," he answered, colouring slightly. "Who could help it? She is simply fascinating. But approve of her, no," and he changed the subject.

"Then you have really quite made up your mind, Gilbert?" asked Mr. Irving one evening, as they were sitting together in the garden.

"My mind has always been made up," answered the young man. "I know my father desired it, of all things; only there was the parting, from which he naturally, at his age, shrank. Now that is over. I have no conflicting duties; I have no ties, save those of friendship. I am strong, in perfect health; no one can be better fitted for mission work than I am."

"If you feel thus, of course you are right to go," said Mr. Irving, "though I must say I am sorry. So few who go forth return home again."

"I know it," answered Gilbert; "but if others are daily laying down their lives in the cause of the Gospel, why should I withhold myself—I, who stand alone in the world, whose life is of no value to anyone?"

"Oh, Gilbert, we care," said Miriam.

"But you would not hold me back from my Master's service?" he said, gently.

"No," she answered, "I would not," and so the subject was settled.

For the next two months they were all much occupied in making the necessary preparations. Miss Bessie undertook the wardrobe, and both she and Miriam were busy with their needles, whilst Gilbert spent the greater part of his time with the village carpenter, smith, and shoemaker.

"I find to be a good missionary it is necessary to be a Jack of all trades," he explained. "We are obliged to put our hands to all sorts of work, if only for example's sake."

By degrees the whole village became interested in the mission question, and when, on his last Sunday amongst them, Gilbert stood up to preach his first sermon, the church was so crowded that the doors had to be left open, and the people stood in the porch to hear him. Like St. Stephen, he was but a deacon, and very young he looked, as, standing there in his white surplice, he gave out his text, "Go thou and preach the Kingdom of God." He told them something of the country he was going to—the far-away African land, some parts of which were so beautiful, a sort of earthly paradise, where "only man was vile." He asked them to think of and pray for him when he was gone from amongst them, as one highly privileged in being called to this work; and if they saw his face no more on earth they were to remember that he had gone forth gladly to do the will of his Lord and Master. There were few dry eyes in the church that day, and as he went home through the churchyard many a rough hand pressed his, many a voice bade him God-speed.

And so he went forth, and Miriam and Miss Bessie settled down once more to their uneventful lives. But both Gilbert and Sylvia had left their mark behind them—the interest in mission work once roused was not allowed to die out, and the village choir prospered. Miriam threw her whole heart into it; she took organ lessons from the organist of the Cathedral at Salisbury, and proved herself to possess no mean talent for music. In due time the schoolmaster declared they wanted too much of him, and yielded his place to Miriam, Mr. Irving taking care he should not be the loser. And during the quiet years which followed, the Vicar saw his dream realised. Miriam, as she grew into womanhood, was his companion and his friend; he was wrapt up in her, they so thoroughly understood each other, and he was satisfied that she was happy.

For the first two or three years they heard several times from Gilbert; he was doing well, and rejoicing in his work. Then the letters ceased to reach them, and they knew that he must have gone on mission work "up the country." "Is he living, or is he dead?" Miriam wondered sometimes, as she knelt at her prayers; but she was satisfied that he was in safe keeping.

Very different were all their feelings about Sylvia. Two years after she left them the Doctor received a letter from her:—

"DEAR GRANDFATHER,—I am off to Italy. I have signed an engagement with Signor Pasca, to join him in a tour through North Italy. It will not be very remunerative, but I shall enjoy it greatly. I hope you will go on sending me my allowance, as I shall have many expenses. I have been singing all the winter in some of the most fashionable Paris *salons*, and I think I may say I have been greatly admired; it has been very amusing. My throat is not very strong, so Italy will do me good. People say I sing too much, but that, of course, is nonsense. Love to my aunts and Miriam. I am sorry sometimes when I think of her buried alive, poor dear!—Your affectionate granddaughter,

"SYLVIA."

"She need not pity me. I am quite sure I am happier than she is," said Miriam, when the Doctor read the letter to her father and herself.

"I hope so, indeed," said the Vicar, kissing her tenderly. "Poor Sylvia! What shall you do, Doctor?"

"What can I do?" answered the old gentleman. "We can't run after her. I knew *that* from the first, so she must go her own gait. I shall send her her allowance and some good advice, which she won't read, and leave her in God's hands; it's all I can do. Poor little butterfly! I'm afraid she'll come home one day with her wings frayed."

"I hope not—oh, I hope not!" said Miriam, tears filling her eyes.

"If it be for her ultimate good, Miriam," said the Vicar; "she is so very wilful."

CHAPTER X.

HOME AGAIN.

IT was Christmas Eve, and the ground white with snow, when Miss Bessie and Miriam left the church after the last practice. The choir had been in full force, and they all came out together.

"No one left behind, I hope," said Miriam, gaily, as she locked the door. They all laughed.

"Take the key to your grandfather, Jim," she said to the sexton's grandson; "and now good-night, and a Happy Christmas to you all."

"The same to you, miss, and many of them," was the spontaneous answer.

At that moment a pony-trap came down the road going towards the Vicarage.

"Dear me," said Miss Bessie, "who can it be?"

Miriam shook her head. "We shall soon know," she answered, and they hurried homewards.

A tall, gaunt figure stepped out of the vehicle just as Miss Bessie and Miriam came up to the Vicarage gate.

"Who are you?" asked Miriam.

"Do you not know me?" said a feeble but still familiar voice.

"Gilbert!" exclaimed simultaneously both Miriam and Miss Bessie, and in another moment they had clasped hands.

The Vicar, hearing the pony-trap stop, came out. "My dear boy," he said, "this is indeed a surprise."

Gilbert made no answer, but merely returned the pressure of the kindly hands stretched out to welcome him, and leaning heavily on the Vicar's arm, entered the old familiar home.

"He's ill," said Miss Bessie, as they followed him into the library; and truly, when they had helped him off with his wraps and he was seated in the large armchair drawn close up before the fire, it would have been difficult to recognise in the hollow-cheeked, pale-faced man the strong, brave-looking young missionary who had stood in the pulpit and bidden them farewell five years before.

"I never thought I should get here," he said, in a tremulous voice. "I've been at death's door a score of times during the last year—malarial and fever attacks, one upon the other. I shall never be a well man again, but at least, thank God, if I am to die I shall have seen you all once more, and I shall die at home," and he lay back in the chair and closed his eyes.

"As you've managed to get here, I think we'll manage to nurse you back to health," said the Vicar, cheerily. "Miriam, run and see if Susan has some good soup, and tell her to let us have a cupful as soon as possible; and, Miss Bessie, will you mind going home and telling the Doctor who my visitor is, and I should be glad if he could come over at once?"

He was obeyed, and as soon as the spare room had been prepared for him, with the Doctor's help, Gilbert was taken upstairs. He was so weak he could hardly stand alone.

"How on earth did you manage the journey from Liverpool? You ought to have telegraphed for me," said the Vicar, standing beside him as he lay at last, with a look of placid content on his face.

"It would have lost time," he answered. "The captain wanted to do so, but I persuaded him to bring me up to London himself, which he did; he was so good to me all through the voyage. He never left me till he saw me into the train at Waterloo, where he gave me in charge to the guard, who looked after me, and so here I am, thank God."

"Yes, thank God," said the Vicar. "Who would have thought of seeing you with us this Christmas eve?"

Gilbert's convalescence was long. The disease itself had been overcome to a great extent during the sea voyage home, but he was lamentably weak, and subject to attacks of aguish fever, which kept him very low.

"He may as well make up his mind to remain at home," said the Doctor, "for he can never stand mission work again; he will never be a really strong man."

Miriam, when once he was downstairs, read and talked to him, whiling away the hours of weakness by her companionship.

"I feel sometimes as if I were dreaming," he said, one evening, as he sat watching her. "I cannot realise that I am really at home in England, and half expect to awake and find myself in a log hut, with very different surroundings."

The villagers longed to get a sight of him, but it was several weeks before he could see even his great friend the carpenter. Susan, who was devoted to him, guarded him from intrusion; she was very indignant at the state he was reduced to.

"You may say what you like, Miss Miriam, about its being a fine thing to be a missionary, but my opinion is they ought to take better care of them. I can't abide to look at him, such a handsome young fellow as he was, too, when he left! Why, he looks older than the master! I hope he don't think of going out to them outlandish places again in a hurry."

"Not for some time, certainly," said Miriam; "we must get him well first."

Miriam was very happy throughout this winter; she never asked herself why or wherefore. Her duties were numerous—her father and Gilbert to attend to, the parish work, and the organ—but they all seemed light to her.

Fortunately, Miss Bessie was there to help. Her presence at the Vicarage at all hours was of daily occurrence. No one paid any attention to her comings and goings; she was always wanted for something, and even the Vicar's study was no longer closed against her. Gossip had long since been silenced as far as she was concerned. Her soft bands of greyish hair ensured her against all suspicion of matrimonial projects, and she was in reality as busy and as happy as Miriam herself.

One day, towards the beginning of April, she came over rather earlier than usual, looking anxious and very serious.

"What has happened, Bessie?" asked Miriam (she had dropped the "Miss" since she had herself attained the years of womanhood).

"We have had a letter from Sylvia; she is in Paris, and has been very ill. The Doctor thinks himself bound to go over and see after her, and wishes me to go also. It seems she has had to undergo an operation—something with her throat—and she says she has lost her voice and shall never be able to sing again."

"Oh, poor Sylvia! How dreadful!" said Miriam. "Of course, you must go to her. Where is she?

"Well, we can't exactly make out. She has been in the hospital, but it appears now as if she were in the house of a Dr. Raymond and his mother."

"The sooner you go over the better, or else she will be getting herself into trouble again," said the Vicar.

And this advice was repeated to the Doctor when he came to pay his daily visit, with the result that three days later he and Miss Bessie started off for Paris, much to Miss Nunn's disgust.

"Don't bring her back here; that's all I've got to say," was her last injunction.

They were gone a fortnight, during which time Miss Bessie wrote once or twice to Miriam, rather mysteriously. She spoke very tenderly of Sylvia, saying, however great her faults might have been, she was severely punished—her voice was quite gone, and she could not speak above a whisper, and, she added, "wonderful to tell," she was very penitent—indeed, quite an altered character.

"Well, Doctor, you look as if Paris had agreed with you," said the Vicar, when the Doctor walked into the study the morning after his return.

Miriam looked up from her writing, and Gilbert laid down his book.

"You've got good news," said Miriam. "Have you brought Sylvia back with you?"

"No, my dear. Think what Mary would have said! I've disposed of her far more advantageously!" said the Doctor, and his eyes positively twinkled with mischief.

"Disposed of her! How?" asked Miriam.

"Guess," said the Doctor, with a sort of chuckle.

"You've surely not got her married?" questioned the Vicar.

"I have, though," answered the Doctor, triumphantly, "and to a first-rate man into the bargain. I wish I could find just such another for you, Miss Miriam. Oh, I beg your pardon, sir, I forgot," he added, seeing the Vicar's brow cloud. "At all events, I am happy to say that Sylvia was married at the British Embassy two days ago, and is now Mrs. Raymond, the wife of Dr. Raymond, a very clever and rising man."

"How did it come about?" asked the Vicar. "I congratulate you most sincerely."

And then the Doctor told the following story. Sylvia had been ailing for some time whilst on a professional tour, and when she returned to Paris she had a severe attack of laryngitis. Her companions, not able, or not willing to nurse her, obtained admittance for her to the British Hertford Hospital. Dr. Raymond was one of the visiting physicians. Her case interested him; her lonely position and her beauty fascinated him. When informed of the loss of her voice, her despair was most piteous to witness. Dr. Raymond persuaded his mother to visit her in the hospital, and, when she came out, to offer her a temporary home. She was deeply touched by this kindness, and with all her headstrong pride and thoughtless worldliness shattered by her affliction and the loving, Christian words of Mrs. Raymond—words which were evidently blessed by God—Sylvia told her whole story, and was induced to write to her grandfather, acknowledging her faults and craving pardon.

"As soon as I saw them together I knew how matters stood," said the Doctor—"the young man was head and ears over in love with her. He soon made a clean breast of it, and what between gratitude and a warmer feeling besides, Sylvia consented to become Mrs. Raymond, junior, as quickly as possible. Her husband hopes to effect a partial cure, but her singing days are over; besides other complications, she overstrained her voice from the first. She is, however, quite reconciled to her loss, and is as gentle and sweet-tempered as she was formerly wilful. I think she had a hard time of it before she fell ill, poor child. But we know that God brings back His erring ones by strange paths."

"Poor Sylvia!" said Miriam.

"Happy Sylvia!" said the Vicar. "All's well that ends well," and then they all shook hands with the Doctor, and congratulated him heartily.

"We must send Sylvia her wedding presents as soon as she gets home," said Miriam.

(*Continued on page* 177.)

A MOTHER'S WAGES.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

IT was an uncouth bird's-nest of rushes in which Jochebed moored her birdling "in the flags by the river's brink." Little did she know what precious freight she was entrusting to that basket-cradle. And little did Pharaoh's daughter know—when she took the little foundling out of the floating basket—what manner of child he yet would be. As she hands back the handsome boy into the very bosom that first gave him life, she says to Jochebed, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."

"I will give thee thy wages," says the Egyptian princess to the Hebrew nurse. She got her wages in better coin than silver or gold. She got them in the joys that a mother feels when she yields up a part of herself to sustain her darling child; she got them in the love of the babe she nursed; she got them in the glorious service that her child wrought for Israel in after years. She was paid in the heavenly coin with which God pays good mothers. For all her anxieties and all her efforts to preserve the life of her "goodly child" she was abundantly rewarded.

When God lays a new-born babe in the arms of a wedded pair, He says to them, "Take this child and nurse it for Me, and I will give you your wages." And the answer of Christian gratitude and faith should be, "O Lord, Thou hast put Thy noblest work into our hands. We accept the precious trust. We will try to stamp on this soft, plastic heart the impress of a godly example. We will shelter this young life under Thy mercy-seat. We will bear with it as Thou bearest with us. We will be truthful, that it may never learn falsehood. We will nurse this soul in its infancy with the 'sincere milk' of love, that in after years it may bear 'strong meat' for strong service of God and righteousness. O God, make our lives in harmony with Thee, that this young life may reflect Thine image in reflecting ours!"

To such pious fidelity God offers the only wages that can satisfy the claims of love. He pays the heart's claim in the heart's own coin. What wages could repay Hannah's prayerful care like the sight of Samuel's after career as Israel's upright judge? Moses standing on the mount was the "wages" of the poor Hebrew mother who cradled him in her basket of rushes. St. Augustine's mighty service for the Gospel was the best reward that God could give to Monica. John Wesley's mother was repaid for all her patient discipline when her son built the world-wide tabernacle for Methodism to worship in. George Washington was God's reward to Washington's good mother; as Archibald Alexander, and Brown of Haddington, and Lyman Beecher found their "wages" in the noble sons who took the Gospel banner from their aged hands. Alas! I have seen other "wages," too, the sad outcome of parental impiety or neglect of duty. Eli's sin was repaid in Eli's sorrow. I have seen a frivolous, prayerless mother paid in the wages of a broken heart. And when to many a father's door a drunken son has been brought home from a Sabbath-breaking debauch, it was only the wages of that father's sin which a just God was paying. The "wages of sin is death," and of no sin more surely than parental. It is death to peace of mind—death to domestic happiness—death to the neglected or misguided souls of evil offspring.

"Take this child and nurse it for Me, and I will give thee thy wages" is the inscription which God's hand writes on every cradle. "When I dress my child each morning,

I pray that Jesus would clothe it with purity," said a good mother to one who inquired her secret of right training. "When I wash it, I pray that His blood may cleanse its young soul from evil; when I feed it, I pray that its heart may be nourished with truth, and may grow into likeness with the youthful Jesus of Nazareth."

Here was religious training from the cradle. It began with the dawn, and its course was like the sun, growing more full-orbed in beauty until the "perfect day." That mother received her golden wages in the early conversion, usefulness, and honour of all her children. What a blessed recompense! "Go, and do thou likewise."

THE THREE LITTLE CHAIRS.

THEY sat alone by the bright wood fire,
The grey-haired dame and aged sire,
Dreaming of days gone by:
The tear-drops fell on each wrinkled cheek,
They both had thoughts they could not speak,
And each heart uttered a sigh;

For their sad and tearful eyes descried
Three little chairs placed side by side
Against the sitting-room wall—
Old-fashioned enough as there they stood,
Their seats of flag and their frames of wood,
With their backs so high and tall.

Then the father shook his silvery head,
And with trembling voice he gently said,
"Mother, these empty chairs;
They bring us such sad thoughts to-night,
We'll put them for ever out of sight
In the small, dark room upstairs."

But she answered, "Father, not yet, not yet;
For I look at them, and I forget
That the children are away.
The boys come back, and our Mary too,
With her apron on of checkered blue,
And sit here every day.

"Johnny comes back from the ocean deep;
Willie wakes from his battle-field sleep
To say good-night to me;
Mary's a wife and mother no more,
But a tired child whose play is o'er,
And comes to rest at my knee.

"So let them stand there, though empty now,
And every time when alone we bow
At the Father's throne to pray,
We'll ask to meet the children above,
In our Saviour's home of rest and love,
Where no child goeth away."

FOR MOTHERS AND WIVES.

BY PHYLLIS BROWNE.

Freedom of Speech among the Little Ones.

FREEDOM of speech among the people is highly valued at the present time, for politicians and students of human nature seem to think that even mistakes and errors become less dangerous when they are ventilated and discussed openly, so that the air of healthy public opinion blows upon them, than they are when covered, and allowed to grow as in a hotbed. Unfortunately it is not in every household or in every school that children are allowed to speak freely. In many homes elders feel it their duty to "snub" the children when they talk. The proverb, "Children should be seen and not heard," has probably done an incalculable amount of harm since it was first uttered. Mothers, do not believe anything of the sort. Let the children talk freely and openly. Let them talk to you, and so find out what they are thinking and hoping. They are sure to talk to someone; how much better that they should talk to their parents than to strangers!

But perhaps elders who love peace and quiet will feel inclined to say in reply to this advice, "If we were to encourage the children to talk freely, we should never be able to hear ourselves speak. They would chatter, chatter, chatter, all day long." With deference may I say that in my opinion that is exactly what they would not do. The children who chatter are the children who are repressed and snubbed for speaking. In schools where the rule of "silence" is frequently enforced, the noise that is made the instant the rule is relaxed is deafening. But in schools where the pupils are allowed to speak when they wish to do so, a gabble is scarcely ever heard. If teachers would try the effect of letting the children speak freely, they would be astonished at the result.

One effect of the constant repression of speech among children is to make them shy and awkward when with strangers. How are children to be at ease with elders and guests unless they are accustomed to bear their own small part in their own small world? Of course, they must not be allowed to monopolise the conversation, or to be impertinent or contradictious; to permit faults of this kind would be a great mistake. Still, let them talk when they wish to do so; only expect them to *listen* as well as to speak, and insist upon their not speaking when others are talking. Then the home will be made happier for both parents and children, because confidence between them will be fostered. Fathers and mothers of young children do not sufficiently realise that if confidence is to be enjoyed twenty years hence, it must be cultivated now.

Elders who fear that if freedom of speech were encouraged amongst children, senseless questions would be continually asked, may be amused to hear that in a certain happy home, where love and trust bore sway, the following plan was adopted to prevent this annoyance. Whenever an absurd question was asked, the mother or father would smilingly say the first line only of the following rhyme, the whole of which all the children knew by heart:—

"'A goose,' my grandma one day said,
'On entering a barn, pops down its head.'
I begged her then the cause to show.
She replied, 'No one but a goose would *ask*
What no one but a goose *should know*.'"

This plan answered excellently. The children understood at once what was meant, but they did not feel snubbed, because they felt that they were parties to the small joke. Yet the kindly criticism made them think before they spoke.

A Baby's Night Bag.

A mother whose baby was a veritable "kicker" adopted the following expedient. She took two old crib blankets, sewed them up at the sides and at one end, leaving the other end open, and thus making a bag. Into this bag she slid Master Baby, drawing it closely around him behind, and pinning it with safety pins in three large pleats in front. Baby's surprise was sudden and complete when he found his pink toes "bagged," but after the bag came into use he had no more colds from that kind of exposure. There was little danger of chill with the warm bag.

Care of Umbrellas.

Umbrellas when wet should be turned upside down to dry, then the moisture drops from the edges of the frame, and the silk dries equally all over. If placed the right way up, the water will soak into the part where the ribs meet, and will cause the silk to rot. Umbrellas also should never when wet be left open while draining. If they are, the ribs will bend, and will not close tightly afterwards.

Baby's Gloves are Lost!

Some babies get through a large stock of gloves in the course of a year. The small articles are not worn out, they are lost; they slip off baby's fingers whilst he is out of doors. No remark is made at the time, but when he reaches home some one says, "Oh dear, baby's glove is lost again." Then poor mother has to buy baby a new pair. A simple way of preventing this mischance is to sew a piece of ribbon upon the glove, and another piece on the sleeve of the coat, and tie the two ribbons in a bow when the gloves are being worn. Then if the glove slips off, it remains hanging to the coat, and is safe when wanted.

How Long Should we Sleep?

With reference to the amount of sleep men and women need, there is an old saying that "Nature requires five (hours' sleep), custom gives seven; idleness takes nine, and wickedness eleven." Arbitrary rules of this sort are all very well; but mothers are advised to act on the following rule: "Encourage children attending school, or young people engaged in study, to have all the sleep they can get."

An Excellent Way of Making Porridge.

Begin to prepare the porridge in the middle of the day previous to the one on which it is to be used for breakfast. Be careful also to procure the coarsest oatmeal for the dish—the variety known in the North of England as "pinhead" oatmeal is to be preferred. Directly after the mid-day meal, put six tablespoonfuls of oatmeal into a double porridge pan, with a pinch of salt, and cover it with cold water. Let it stand till after tea, then pour on about a pint of boiling water, and mix it well by stirring it. Put the pan on the fire and let the oatmeal cook till bed-time, about four hours. Just before leaving the kitchen for the night, stir the porridge again, and leave it standing on the hob, covered. Next morning it will be necessary only to put the pan on the fire and let the porridge get hot through. Porridge made thus is almost like jelly; the grains seem to be melted. It is also very easy of digestion, and people who will not eat the ordinary porridge sometimes like it very much. Eaten with cream it is quite a luxurious dish.

ABOUT THREAD-MAKING.

SOME of the simplest articles used by the busy needlewoman—especially the devoted mother with several active boys and girls to mend and sew for—are far more interesting in the various stages of their production than might be supposed. Did you ever examine into the process of manufacturing a spool of thread? It looks simple, but in reality it is a very complicated process. Only the very best Sea Island cotton can be used for this purpose. The cotton is taken in the raw state, and torn all to pieces by a machine called a "breaker." It then goes through several other machines, by which it is carefully combed and freed from impurities. A machine called a "slipper" then takes it up, and twists it out into soft white yarn. This is carefully combed again, and it is then taken into another department, where several small strands of this yarn are twisted into one fine one. Three of these are twisted together, and you then have six-cord thread, which, after it is bleached, is ready for the market.

Cotton Plant.

Another interesting thing is the numbering of the thread. Every lady knows the size of thread that she requires for doing a certain piece of work, but very few know how it came to be so numbered. When cotton thread was first made, 840 yards of it weighed one pound. This was called No. 1, and if a pound contained just twice this number of yards, it was called No. 2, and so on. Until sewing machines were introduced, only three-cord thread was made, but their introduction demanded a smoother and finer article. The numbers were left the same, but the six-cord thread had to be made of strands just twice as fine as those of the old article.

W. B. T.

HER BEST FRIEND.

"WELL, if you won't repeat it to your mother, I'll tell you something."

"I don't want to know it then, for I tell my mother everything."

A loud laugh followed this last remark, and a rather bright girl said—"Oh, I don't tell my mother *anything*. First she tells father, then she tells sister Fanny, and Fan tells Bob, and so it goes on till they all know it; and if it's anything teasy, I never hear the last of it."

"Well," replied the second speaker, "I'm glad my mother is different. She never mentions to others anything we tell her, if it's a confidence; and we tell her all our trials and troubles."

Now, my dear mothers, these were little girls—at least, you would all class them as such—lassies of thirteen and fourteen; just the age when they do or say so many indiscreet things; just the time when they are apt to begin to carry on sly correspondence with boys of their own age, or probably have their first love affair.

How much better if at this time you have their confidence! if it is to you that they come, instead of going to some older girl, who might delight to encourage them in some foolish act! This is just the age when many young, pretty girls are enticed away from home by the glitter and glamour of a theatrical life; just the age when attentions from some grown man prove so much more alluring and fascinating than home attractions, that many have gone to their ruin, to regret it for a lifetime afterwards. There is no time when a girl needs her mother for her friend more than from thirteen to twenty years of age. I think it is pitiful for a girl to marry between these two periods. She has hardly begun to live, hardly had any time to taste the sweetness of her girlhood or to enjoy the freedom of her care-free life.

Probably you have been so much engrossed by your housekeeping cares that you have not taken time to study the unfolding of your daughters' characters, and, perhaps, sometimes you have repulsed their confidence, and so they have gone to strangers. It may be that they are reading things not good for them, or keeping company with some other girl who is no help to them.

These things must be looked into, while closest vigilance is needed if we would keep our girls away from much of the evil there is in the world. When they begin to choose their special friends, do not withdraw yourself from them all, but make one of the company, and enter into their amusements.

Who can chaperone your young daughter anywhere so well as yourself? But if you do not go as her best friend, she will not want you. So begin early in her life to be that best friend. There comes a time when there is nothing you can hold your daughters by except their hearts; therefore seek to secure their entire confidence and affection from their youngest years.

S. R.

CHILDREN'S SAYINGS.

THAT mother is wise who does not unduly stimulate the self-consciousness of her child, and thus lay the foundation for life-long habits of affectation. If clever children do not always make clever men and women, a partial reason may be found in the way they are commonly treated. They find grown-up people constantly on the watch to hear, and most industrious in repeating their original speeches; and soon they exchange the gift of originality, which consists in seeing and expressing things in an unconventional manner, for the very inferior one of making smart speeches. They are thus forced by the very admiration of their elders into taking conventional instead of unconventional views, and "talking down," as it were, to people, instead of uttering spontaneous truths with that freshness so delightful in unspoilt children.

The way to promote originality is to leave the mind as long as possible in direct and living contact with things, and to do that it is necessary to avoid any great appearance of interest in or astonishment at the judgments the child forms or the phrases it uses. As soon as a child begins to find its own *opinions* interesting, instead of, as before, finding *things* interesting, farewell to originality! Will anyone say that, if elder girls were taught how the minds of children might be kept fresh, they would not value the knowledge and, when the time came, try to turn it to account? We hardly think so.

Preparing for the Evening Meal.

YOUNG AND OLD IN CHINA.

"UT-SHIM! instead of loitering in the doorway, come and cut up this bean-curd for the evening meal."

"I do not know how to do it, mother," was the unwilling reply of the small maiden. But she came obediently.

"Then see how I do it, and make good use of your eyes that you may know how to set about it next time I call you."

So Ut-shim stood meekly by her mother's side, watching that and sundry other culinary operations, well knowing that if she did not do it properly when that "next time" should come, a reprimand and a beating would be her portion of the feast. Doubtless she would rather have been in the street, or in the doorway; not playing (for Chinese children know little of the exhilaration born of a merry game or a romp), but idling or chattering as the case might be.

"Poor child!" shall we say? Or shall we congratulate her that she had a mother careful and watchful enough to train her into the two supreme virtues which had been her own sole education—obedience and industry?

Hitherto Ut-shim's only "industry" had been to carry about in house or street, strapped firmly on her own young back, one of her still younger brothers or sisters. It was not such hard work as it might seem; for the back soon grew as accustomed to the burden as the infant did to the position. The latter did not crave (as a Western baby might have done) for a little more attention or introduction to worldly excitement; its duty was to sleep; or to be sleepily and stolidly wakeful, without exacting any effort of word or look from either mother or sister. These two were quite satisfied so long as no fractious cry of pain or passion took off the thoughts of the one from busy work in the house, or of the other from idle dawdling outside.

"Poor mother!" shall we say? Or shall we admire the unquestioning content with which she went about her simple daily duties, without a hankering desire for anything more exciting or pleasurable to vary their monotony? She rose at early dawn, kindled the wood or the charcoal fire to cook the morning rice, or boil the water for the never varying tea. She cut up the small portions of vegetable or curd, of fish, or fowl, or pork, to provide sufficient dainties for her "lord and master," meekly eating herself afterwards whatever might chance to be left; but always taking care that, then or some other time, her children should have as much as they wanted. She swept the floor after each meal of all its scattered remnants, though to the use of water as a cleansing agent she had never been accustomed.

She dressed her children neatly and comfortably according to the season of the year; washing their hands and faces now and then in the course of the day, though neither they nor she were ever acquainted with the use of a bath. She "did their hair up" perhaps once a week, possibly washing it once a month or so; and as she probably did her own rather less frequently, that would be considered quite often enough, with a touch in the morning of a sticky liquid made from resinous shavings to keep the black locks of the girls in their places, or an extra wash for the shaven pates of the boys.

Off to the Tea Plantation.

"Now, Akit, it is time for school!" and every morning all her motherly pride was aroused as she prepared her eldest son for that necessary episode in his daily life; seeing him duly equipped with the gay-coloured handkerchief to wrap his books and the "four precious things"—paper, brush-pen, ink, and ink-stone—with which he marched off. Perhaps that was the brightest, happiest moment in the mother's day, as she stood at the door watching him down the street, feeling that in him were bound up all her hopes for the stay of her old age, and the performance of the rites of ancestral worship when she and his father should be numbered with the dead.

But for Ut-shim was no such pride and hope. Not for her was any of the pleasure of outside life, or the opening of mental activity by the key of learning. For her in the mother's heart was no ambition; only a dull, passionless care that she should be reared as a healthy, industrious, obedient child, so that she might be fit to be bartered away, when old enough, to the most eligible husband. Not by or in her would come back any repayment for maternal care, when childhood and girlhood should have developed the woman; for any grace or beauty or talent she might evince then would be for the benefit of some unknown mother-in-law, who would treat her as a drudge or slave through the best years of her life.

But for that lot, nevertheless, Ut-shim must be duly prepared. So the mother called her from the easy care of the babies to the more difficult task of the cooking, the house-work, the mending or making of the clothes of the family; and many were the harsh words and angry beatings she received before she learnt to do either and all satisfactorily. Not because her mother had no affection for her, but because these things must be taught, and she knew no better method of teaching. Skilfulness in domestic duties must be acquired; though the mother knew nothing of the growth of moral or spiritual character which should be developed. So Ut-shim's hands grew deft and useful, but mind and heart slept on, and her mother knew not how much was lost to them both.

Ut-shim's home was a poor one; her mother had, nevertheless, bound her feet in early childhood, to ensure a good marriage for her eldest girl, though her younger sister was left to the happier freedom of nature. There was but one sister—perhaps the mother knew whether two others of the unwelcome sex had been disposed of by drowning, or smothering, or mere neglect! But the small feet also ensured for Ut-shim more home care and ease; and also

A Floating Home on a Chinese Canal.

greater consideration in the choice of fitting occupation when the child had grown into the girl, and she must do something to earn a few *cash* for the family ere arrangements were made for suitable betrothal and marriage.

Ut-shim could not be put to field work like her large-footed sister. So sometimes her skilful fingers were set to make the "paper-money" which is burnt in such immense quantities to provide for the needs of the denizens of the spirit world who have passed away from the use of metal coin; sometimes to paste together the bits of old rag or paper which form the cardboard for the making of shoes; and sometimes (which she liked better than either) she was sent with basket in one hand and low bamboo stool in the other, to spend long hours of a sunny day picking tea or cotton in the plantation outskirts of the large house and garden of one of her richer neighbours.

As Ut-shim passed on these occasions across the matted

floor of the mansion, by the handsomely carved ebony furniture, the costly china vases, the richly gilt-embroidered scrolls on the walls, through the tastefully-arranged garden with its group of gaily-attired ladies and children into the outer ground where lay her morning's work, did she indulge any feeling of envy or discontent at her own poor lot? Perhaps she did, for human nature is the same, whether its expression is vented or repressed. But if so, she said nothing; the stolid outcome of repressive education being a dull, passive reception of fate—an unquestioned bearing of whatever happened.

And at last the busy efforts of a professional "match-maker" had achieved Ut-shim's "fate," which was that of the wife of a boatman, for married to someone every Chinese maiden must be.

Not that her floating home was one of the narrowest and dirtiest junks of inland river or canal. There are grades in boat life as in all other, and her small feet had found her entrance as a bride into some roomier and more pretentious craft than might otherwise have been the case. But henceforth her life would be even more circumscribed than it had been in her parents' home. There would be plenty of hard and unaccustomed work for her in sculling, rowing, poling, at her husband's command; while the usual wifely duties of rice-cooking, and clothes-making, and baby-nursing would all have to be performed as deftly as in more propitious surroundings.

Possibly, however, Ut-shim thought there was one compensation for every boat discomfort. Her husband's parents were maintained by him ashore, and though this might lessen the *cash* at her command, it delivered her from the tyranny of the dreaded mother-in-law, or its protecting care, as the case might be.

But Ut-shim's mother had to let her go to any fate in store, knowing that she was lost to her entirely.

"Poor daughter! poor mother!" we might say; for, judged by our Western code of family relationships, the career of one will be as colourless, as devoid of the finer susceptibilities of human nature, as that of the other has been before her.

"Poor wives both!" we might add—we who glory in the romance, the poetry, the high and holy ideal of the marriage tie, when heart gives itself to heart, when life unites itself to life, in bonds not of earth and time only, but of the heavenly and the eternal. What knew Ut-shim or her mother of such? Nothing, absolutely nothing.

But to whom little is given, of them much shall not be required. On their natures had been bestowed little of the wealth of human affection; from them little was called for of reciprocal demonstration. They—either daughter or mother—would have deemed it the greatest of improprieties to speak or think of such a matter as love—to expect it or rejoice in it. But such as they had they gave. Instead of love, plodding, persevering duty; instead of devotion, silent, uncomplaining submission; instead of words of affection, lives of lowly obedience.

Does not the God of all the ends of the earth speak His gracious "Well done, good and faithful in few things" to such lives, lived up to the best they know? And if to either of these women, old or young, should ever come the knowledge of Him, to waken the dormant mind, to soften the stolid character, to warm the cold heart, will not the new life be all the stronger because the old was trained to one sterling virtue, even that of obedience to a will higher than their own, meekly acknowledged and as submissively followed?

M. J. Oxlad.

THE MODEL MOTHER.

BY E. S. L. THOMPSON.

A HOME must indeed be worthy of its name, not a mere refuge from the weather, a place for meals, or a shelter in sleeping hours. Has any song ever made so deep an impression upon the whole human race as "Home, Sweet Home"? And with the sacred word "home" is always connected the word "mother." The "Model Mother" begins her work before the birth of her child, in that she cultivates a pure, calm, noble, and happy frame of mind, always considering the greatest "physical, moral, and mental development of her child," and using every means in her power for the attainment of this intensely important object.

Cleanliness must be taught early to the little ones, for a healthy and well-kept body is necessary to the full development of a perfect mind. The "golden opportunities" for the mother lie in that formative period which we call childhood.

The model mother makes a cheerful home—one where work and pleasure are blended into an harmonious whole; one where there is always something to occupy the restless minds of active boys and fun-loving girls, some loving act of mutual helpfulness to be done, leaving no idle hours in which the tares may be sown among the wheat.

The model mother never forgets that she was a child herself; never forgets that time and expense are well invested in making home the brightest and most attractive place on earth. Legitimate pleasures always add to the moral and intellectual development, and subordinate evil forces, if any such exist. The model mother must rise to the dignity of her own individual life, ministering to the wants of her family in the fear of God and the love of all humanity.

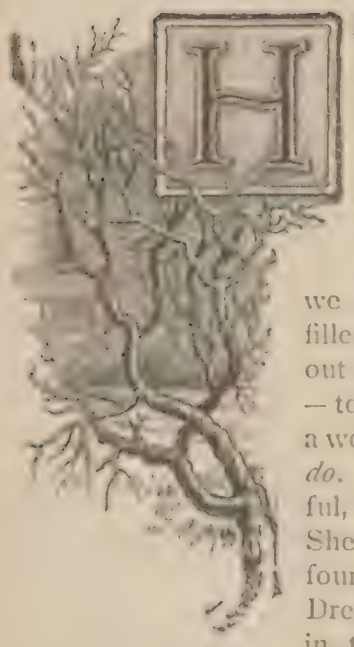
"You will get no more out of life than you put into it." Hence, to make the lives of your children successful and happy, put into their training all of energy, intellect, and love that you possess!

One has truly said: "May we ever bear in mind that we are stewards, not only of the manifold grace of God, but of every other blessing we enjoy, and that we are accountable not merely for those committed to our care, but for the proper application of the means with which we are furnished for their support and complete development into perfect men and women, competent to perform the important duties of life."

The model mother does not expect old heads on young shoulders; she mingles with her children and sympathises with their plans, hopes, and fears. She is never indifferent to their smallest interests; nor does she raise herself on to a pedestal of frigid superiority. She opens up to her children the higher and more ennobling channels of thought; she gives them ideals from her own pure and lofty character.

A GENEROUS WOMAN.

BY MRS. SKINNER.



HER story is a time-honoured one, yet ever new, for it is being repeated in the lives of some of the women of to-day, like the familiar strains of an old melody. She was a woman who had an intense desire *to do something specially generous and kind.* And we all know what it is at times to be filled with a longing to do something out of the ordinary round of actions—to rise to higher efforts. She was a woman *who found out what she could do.* We are not always so successful, because not sufficiently observant. She was a woman who did what she found was possible to be done. Dreams and wishes are all very well in their way, though they form no part in the necessary equipment for our life, and if not followed by actions are but as the useless case and dial of a watch without the interior works.

What "a generous woman" did was—

A DEED OF LOVE. There had come into her life a holy love. One who was of kingly birth, though dressed in common garb and whose hands were hard with toil, had won her heart's loyal allegiance, and her soul had cried out, "How can I prove the love I feel? How can I show honour for honour conferred?" The sun shone on the hills around her home, and the flowers sprang forth, and the green leaves waved, all in response to its beams of love. The beams of a sun far more resplendent had shone upon the garden of her soul, and there were strange promptings and wonderful stirrings as to the form, colour, and odour her love's offering should take. And, sisters, if we have felt the same love, if the same gracious Presence has taken possession of our hearts and homes, shall we not seek, in some definite and noble form, to show our answering love?

A DEED OF SACRIFICE. "Ah," thought Mary of Bethany, "I have some money saved; for years I have been hoarding up my little treasure. I will haste into the city and spend it—spend it all—for my Lord! I will buy some perfume rare; it shall be in purest alabaster, and to-night at the supper which sister Martha has so beautifully prepared I will anoint Him." She might have bought cheap perfumery in a wooden box, but she deemed nothing too good for Christ Jesus her Lord. He was so weary; His sad eyes told the truth of His name, "Man of Sorrows;" so many spitefully used Him, so many rejected Him, and gave Him no offering! He should know to-night for a certainty there was at least one woman who loved Him, and who was willing to give Him her all! Many of us love the same Lord, but we buy our costly dresses, our concert tickets—and then we put our fingers into the corners of our purses to see if a threepenny bit can be found for the work of the Lord. We would even gladly give coppers if they only looked less vulgar.

A DEED OF HEROISM. Mary, if she gave herself time to think, would know she would be severely criticised. Some would say, "I never saw such a thing done before!" Others, "What a waste!" and Martha might say, "You had better have spent your money in something more useful." But love made her brave—enabled her to rise above what people might think about her. If once we have resolved what is best to be done, we should do it in spite of criticism, comments, or discouragements. If it is something no woman has ever done before, and people deem you unwomanly, never mind—go on, if only you have the surety of God's leading. Phœbe Brown was criticised for leaving her family to attend an evening prayer meeting. The thought that any should deem her neglectful of her family was painful; but, conscious she was omitting no duty, she continued the practice, and one night wrote the lines—

"I love to steal awhile away
From little ones and care,
And spend the hours of setting day
In gratitude and prayer."

A DEED THAT WAS PERFECT. The alabaster box was broken, the spikenard used, and in the eulogy that followed were the words, "She hath done what she could." Completeness of effort. When we compare our service and offerings with those of Mary, do they give the same idea of completeness? Are they as perfect, lacking nothing in purity of aim and whole-hearted endeavour?

A DEED RECOGNISED. The Lord praised her, defended her; and her heart drank in His words as doth the parched summer garden the cool night dews. There are many unknown heroines whose deeds of kindness are never recognised by men. Patient wives and mothers who darn innumerable stockings, faithful maids whose patience with fractious children is something angelic—these are often not only not praised, but are even blamed. The cross which many bear in the fact of being misunderstood and unappreciated, is a heavy one; but how glorious the thought that the One above knows all, and that not one lowly deed done for Him is unrecognised!

A DEED GLORIFIED. It had been a small thing to do, in Mary's estimation, but the Master had made it a thing to be praised, and saw in it a significance she had not realised. He takes our small and broken things, and with His smile of approval shapes and gilds them into lofty loveliness. Some people speak of the waste of missionary effort. Nothing is wasted done for Him, for our very "foolishness" He can turn to "praise." He who gilds the storm-cloud with the rainbow, takes of coloured leaves and makes the rose, from the dead seed brings gorgeous life and beauty, forms diamonds from dust, transforms decay into life, makes the night luminous, and opens in the midnight hour glimpses of His greatness daylight hides, can surely take our lowliest deeds and make them beautiful! Has He not done so in the past? Did He not take torches from martyrs' fires, and light the world with them? Did He not catch the whispers of dying saints, and make them trumpet blasts to awaken continents? Has He not used weak women thousands of times to work His almighty will? And has He not made even of halfpenny tracts instruments far mightier than those used for earth's horrid wars?

O Master Divine! take Thou my feeblest efforts, and use them for Thy glory! Not that I may win any praise of man, but that Thou mayest be triumphant, and soon return. Sisters, let us help to make this the prayer of every English woman!

A DEED MADE FAMOUS. Wherever the Gospel is

preached Mary's deed is to be proclaimed for a memorial. Many queens have lived since then whose names are forgotten, many memorial monuments reared that are now dust; but the fame of Mary's deed endures. We may never win earthly fame, but our deeds are "harvest for eternity." They are recorded above. "For every deed done in the body we must give an account. "We live in deeds, not years." How necessary they should be golden deeds!

A Deed to be Copied. Do you ask, "Why?" Because there surely exists no woman who would rather be mean than noble! Do not say you are too weak, or too poor, or too old. Remember Florence Nightingale, the widow with her two mites, and the Frenchwoman who was a prison visitor at the age of ninety-six. Do you say "What shall I do?" The Lord Himself is always the teacher of *willing* hearts. Do you ask, "What shall I give first?" The answer is, "Yourself." If on your birthday you are estranged from your husband, but because it is the proper thing to do, he brings you a gift, with stern, set face and silent voice, does not your heart cry out, "Away with such a gift! it is a mockery. One look of love as in the days of old, one tender word of endearment, would have been more precious than pearls!" God stoops down from His sapphire skies, and whispers to each one of us, "*Give Me thy heart.*" Love without a gift is preferable to a gift without love; but deep heart-love *must* show itself in deeds.

UNCHANGEABLE.

NO ebbings in the sea of love
That laves our feet from yonder shore!
To-day it flows as full and deep
As e'er it did in days of yore.

Earth's rivulet of human love
Is dry when most we need its aid,
And leaves the tear upon the cheek
Of those whose trust is on it stayed.

Some friendships, like gay summer flowers,
Are fair when all things else are fair;
Yet some, like heaven's glittering stars,
Shine clearest in a frosty air.

From friendships, false or true, we turn
To Thee, O Love! who art the same,
Unchangeable midst storm or calm—
Our Friend and Father is Thy name.

RACHEL HARVEY'S DELIVERANCE.

BY A. STUART FLETCHER.

A NORTH-COUNTRY lane ran along the brow of a hill. Behind, in the distance, rose a line of purple woods; below, in the valley, a heavy cloud of smoke marked the site of a large manufacturing town. Along the lane a young woman walked. She looked tired, and her shoes were covered with dust. Seeing a whitewashed cottage by the roadside, she stopped, and after a moment's hesitation knocked timidly at the door.

"Come in," said a voice, and the stranger entered.

A young woman sat hushing a child to sleep.

"Can you give me a drink of water?" asked the stranger. "It's hot walking, and I haven't passed a spring for miles. I'll hold the child if you must get up."

The young mother looked curiously at her, but filled a cup from a stone pitcher. "Walked far?" she asked.

"From Warstone."

"That's a good step. You're going to Millborough, I suppose?"

"Yes," said the stranger. "I want to get work there if I can, in the mills."

"It's a bad time now; some of the mills are on half work, and turning away their own hands, and you don't look as if you'd been used to mill work, either."

"I haven't," said the other, quietly, and rose to go.

"Why, bless me, the child's fast asleep, and so fretful as she was, too! You like children, that's clear. Have you got any of your own?" and the mother looked at the plain gold ring on the stranger's ungloved left hand.

"I had one; it died at a week old. It's father never saw it—he died too, of fever. Good day, and thank you," and before the mother could ask another question the stranger had left the cottage. The cottager watched her from the door.

"She's a fine-looking woman," she said to herself, "but a bit touched by her trouble, I fancy."

Hardened and embittered by her trouble poor Rachel Harvey certainly was. Friendless and in poverty, with husband and child taken from her, she had begun to say in her heart, "God has forsaken me; there is no place for me in the world."

It was evening when Rachel reached Millborough, and when she had found a homely lodging and taken a frugal meal it was too late to begin her search for work.

But next day, and for days after that, she went from mill to mill in vain. What the woman at the cottage had told her was true—many regular hands were out of employ. There was no place for an inexperienced stranger.

It seemed equally difficult to get work of any other kind, too. Nobody knew her, nobody wanted her.

Rachel's little stock of money was soon spent, and she was in her landlady's debt for rent and food. She would have gone on to another town but for this. The woman was suspicious that she would leave, and she stayed on from day to day, hoping against hope that the longed-for work would be found.

Her small stock of clothing grew miserably less; her good shawl disappeared, and her neat bonnet was replaced by a handkerchief such as the mill women wore. But this seemed only to stave off destitution a few days more. Then the weather changed, and a cold, drizzling rain set in.

Rachel set off one morning with a desperate feeling at her heart. "Why should I bear it any longer? God has

forsaken me. He knows what a strait I am in, and if He cared He would save me. I will try one more day, and then——" But even in that bitter mood Rachel dared not say what then.

The day wore on just as other days had done, in weariness and discouragement. But to its gloom was added the drizzling rain that beat the smoke down until the air was thick and dark at mid-day. The footways were covered with black mud; Rachel's worn boots were like wet paper on her feet, her thin shawl was drenched through and through.

It grew to evening. Rachel had eaten nothing all day. And now, instead of turning homewards, she bent her steps towards a solitary path, where a dark canal wound sluggishly along between wharves and warehouses. A thick pall of smoke was overhead, and though the rain had ceased, the water lay in pools on the footpath and dripped from the rank grass at the canal side.

"She led the child away from the dreary path."

What was Rachel doing here? Ah, God defend the poor woman in her extremity!

A little cry broke the silence, a child's voice, crying piteously, "Mammy, mammy."

Rachel turned and saw a little girl crouched in the shelter of an empty boat moored to the canal side. The sight of the child roused her from her own misery.

"What is it, my darling?" she cried, taking a benumbed little hand in hers.

"Oh, mammy, mammy! I'm lost. Where are you?"

"What is your mammy's name? We'll go and find her."

As well as she could from the faltering speech, Rachel made out the name of Norris, but the child could give no clue to her address.

"We'll find her, my pet, never fear," she said again, and still holding the little hand, led the child away from the dreary path to the lighted regions of the town. One look backward she gave on that scene she would never forget. Had God really saved her? *Did* He care?

Poor Jenny's little feet were tired already, and before many steps were taken Rachel decided to place her in her own poor bed, and then search alone for the mother. The child was soon asleep, and Rachel kissed the little face lovingly before she locked the door and left.

Calling first at the police station to leave word there, Rachel set out on her almost hopeless quest. But her own heart had not felt so full of hope for months. Had not God given her something to do—the opportunity of bringing joy to another mother's heart, though her own was aching.

And at midnight Jenny's mother bent over her sleeping child.

"You have saved my darling! God for ever bless you!"

"God sent her to save me," said Rachel, simply.

And before Mrs. Norris left she had given Rachel an idea which had hope in it for the future. She was a widow, obliged to work in the mills, and to leave little Jenny in the care of a "minder," who had suffered her to stray away and lose herself. Rachel found that many a mother, like Mrs. Norris, had to leave her little ones in like manner. Why should not she, with a heart full of love for children, take care of these little ones for the few pence a day the mothers were able to pay?

She began first with one or two in Mrs. Norris's room. But the mothers who cared for their children's welfare soon discovered how they throve under her care, and she soon had to take her own room, and at last her own little house. And there, if you pass at the hour when the women leave the mills, you will find a small crowd of mothers come for their little ones, and stopping to consult Mrs. Harvey about Johnny's teeth or Polly's vaccination, or to tell their troubles to the kindly woman whose sympathy never fails.

And when the babies are gone, there comes a chubby little school-girl to learn to sew and mend, clean and cook. For it is Jenny's great ambition to grow up a handy, helpful maid, and go one day to help her dear Mrs. Harvey, whom with all her simple little soul she loves.

A WOMAN'S CARE OF HERSELF.

EVERY mistress of a household should consider it her duty to take care of *herself*. Some of the best intentioned women fail in everything because they fail in this. They are so anxious to do what they can for other members of the household, that they offer themselves as a perpetual sacrifice; take "snatch" meals when the husband is at business, and the children are at school; work until they are utterly exhausted when there is no one to hinder them, and let their own dress "go" in order that those they love may be comfortably clad. The consequences are that, through doing without proper food and working beyond their strength, they lose their health, and with it their power for usefulness; and through neglecting their appearance, they run the risk of losing the affection and respect of their home-folk.

There are probably very few men who can maintain their admiration, perhaps even their affection, for a woman who is constantly unbecomingly dressed. The mistress of a household, therefore, who desires to keep her hold over her husband, should resolutely persevere in making the best of herself. She need never trouble to obtain costly apparel (men rarely appraise the money-value of a garment, it is women who do that); but if she is wise she will try to be neat, and to wear what suits her and looks attractive. Then, too, with regard to her health. If the health of the mistress fail, the whole household becomes disorganised, and every member thereof made uncomfortable. But if the mistress remain energetic and vigorous, she will find a cure for most of the evils which may befall.

Some people think that women must always be ailing, and that it is part of the natural order of things that they should be so. This is not true. Women have themselves to thank for the greater share of their weakness, because they do not care to obey the laws of health, and live in a foolish and unhealthy way. No one can disobey these laws, however, and go scot free. Whilst managing their households, therefore, and those who belong thereto, mothers should not fail to manage themselves and their own health. It is wrong for anyone to throw health and vigour away; but it is especially wrong for the mistress of a household to do so, because it is impossible for her to suffer without others suffering also.

From what has been said, it will be evident that the position of the mistress of a household is by no means an easy one to fill. It calls for exercise of the very highest qualities, but its importance cannot be over-estimated. The welfare, the comfort, the health, and the happiness of every member of the family depend chiefly upon whether or not the mistress is equal to her task; and the woman who, being placed in the position of the mistress of a household, fails to make and keep a happy home, is one of the most disastrous and pitiful of failures.

THE LOVE OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

BY EMMA CHURCHMAN HEWITT.

LIFE, with many of us, is a hard and barren path at best. I am not saying that this is not a beautiful world, or that people cannot, except in extreme cases, have a "good time" if they know how. I am saying just the reverse. Life is a hard and barren place at best for many of us; *but*, in many cases, it is the fault of the traveller himself or herself that it is a barren waste through which he or she passes. It may be the fault of education, it may be the fault of innate disposition and proclivities, but it is there; and "fault" is used advisedly as a word to express it.

Not long ago a mother said to me, "My Gertrude has a most *unhappy* disposition. She said to me the other day, 'I wish I could be happy once.' I said to her, 'Gertrude, weren't you *ever* happy?' 'No, mamma,' she replied—'never in all my life can I remember being happy.' And she told the truth. I have never seen her happy. She is only fourteen, too. We have done everything under the sun for her, but I think she must have been born with a very melancholy, unhappy disposition." And the mother actually looked as if she prided herself on having a daughter who possessed a unique affliction! I said as nearly *nothing* as possible in reply—it was just one of those cases where *not* to express one's opinion is exceedingly difficult, and one word *said* oft-times lets loose a flood-gate that is hard to close, or it involves a discussion into which one would much rather not be led.

Unhappy at fourteen! Never knew what it was to be happy since she was born! Absurd. They had done everything they could for her! Doubtless; and in that very thing lay the difficulty. I never was in their house in my life, but I know the methods which have been adopted in bringing up this chronically unhappy girl as well as if I had seen them. The fact that her mother herself said she asked her if she had never been happy, is a clue to the whole situation. The girl has been talked about before her face, and questioned and sympathised with and commiserated until she has grown to imagine herself a young lady of vast importance—one whose feelings are always subject to comment, and whose unhappiness is a source of distress to those around her. How she has positively luxuriated in her misery!

But what has all this to do with the cultivation of the beautiful? you ask. Much—much more than the casual observer would imagine.

When God first made woman, He implanted in her breast a variety of emotions, sensations, and feelings which she was to hand down to unborn generations. Among these was a love of the beautiful. We see this evidenced in various ways, not only by different individuals, but by nations, even though that which to one is hideousness to another is beauty. But that does not alter the premise. The hideousness takes the place of beauty, and as such it gratifies the inborn love of the beautiful. Each instinct of ours which can be innocently gratified is a source of happiness, and how wise, therefore—nay, how absolutely necessary is it that *everything* which can give innocent happiness should be cultivated to its fullest extent!

We cannot begin too early to teach our children to notice the million beauties about them. "Look, baby! look at the sunset!" should be among the first cries with which the mother attracts her child's attention to surrounding objects.

Teach the children to note here and there beauties of form, colour, expression, and effect. Let them lose all idea of the material—the effect is the thing which should mainly attract their attention. "Oh, mamma, look! isn't it pretty?" exclaimed a little girl of four, as she paused in her play. And what do you suppose it was? A bundle of coloured rags, dead blue and green and red and grey, across which a beam of sunshine fell. And, humble instrument as it was, it preached a sermon on the value of insignificant things in making up the perfect pattern of the web of life—and truly beautiful it was. The child had been given, by her parents, the key to much real enjoyment, real *happiness*.

I have watched the path of that child, and know that the element which has been fostered in her from babyhood has been of the utmost benefit to her. It permeates her whole life. On dark and dreary days, to her the clouds are a delicate shade of grey or assume beautiful forms. The sunset, the "glowing heart of a rose," the shape of a leaf, a brilliant insect—any and all are sources of real pleasure to her. And who shall say that she is not *better* for it? Who does not know how much easier it is to be good when we are happy? It always seems to me that the reverse of the saying, "To be good is to be happy," may be the truest, after all. Who has not felt at peace with all the world when conscious that some long-desired happiness has come to pass? And she who can find in daily life little obscure causes of happiness owns a mine of which the stock never diminishes, no matter to what an extent it is worked.

Life is so real, so earnest, so sad to many of us, that it is a terrible thing to enter manhood or womanhood handicapped by nature or training with a disposition towards the pessimistic. The best of us know that too often the highest enjoyment is tinged with a subtle sadness which cannot be defined. The evil around us *will* cast a shadow over brightest hours. We forget the glories of life in contemplation of its sins; so that it behoves even the good to be alive to all that is true and beautiful.

Let every mother, then, take this matter to heart, and give to her child, as one shield against unhappiness, a love of the beautiful. With this ingrounded, and good health, her children will be indeed armed for the battle of life.

THE BABY.

Who knows not the beautiful group of babe and mother, sacred in nature, sacred also in the religious associations of half the globe? Welcome to the parents is the puny struggler, strong in his weakness, his little arms more irresistible than the soldier's, his lips touched with persuasion which Chatham and Pericles in manhood had not. The small despot asks so little, that all nature and reason are on his side. His ignorance is more charming than all knowledge, and his little offences more bewitching than all virtue. All day between his three or four sleeps he coos like a pigeon-house, sputters and spurns, and puts on faces of importance; and when he fasts, the little Pharisee fails not to sound his trumpet before him. Out of blocks, thread-spools, cards, and checkers he will build his pyramid with the gravity of Palladio. With an acoustic apparatus of whistle and rattle, he explores the laws of sound. But chiefly, like his seniors, the tiny fellow studies new and speedier modes of transportation. Mistrusting the cunning of his small legs, he wishes to ride on the necks and shoulders of all flesh. The small enchanter nothing can withstand—no seniority of age, no gravity of character; uncles, aunts, cousins, grandsires, grandmas—all fall an easy prey. He conforms to nobody; all conform to him, all caper and make mouths and babble and chirrup to him. On the strongest shoulders he rides, and pulls the hair of laurelled heads.

R. W. Emerson.

IN THE FIRELIGHT.

The fire upon the hearth is low,
And there is stillness everywhere;
Like troubled spirits here and there,
The firelight shadows fluttering go;
And as the shadows round me creep,
A childish treble breaks the gloom,
And softly from a farther room
Comes, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

And somehow, with that little prayer,
And that sweet treble in my ears,
My thought goes back to distant years
And lingers with a dear one there;
And as I hear the child's "Amen,"
My mother's faith comes back to me;
Crouched at her side I seem to be,
And Mother holds my hands again.

Oh for an hour in that dear place!
Oh for the peace of that dear time!
Oh for that childish trust sublime!
Oh for a glimpse of Mother's face!
Yet, as the shadows round me creep,
I do not seem to be alone—
Sweet magic of that treble tone
And "Now I lay me down to sleep!"

Eugene Field.

PARENTAL DUTY.

We shall never have in England education such as we ought to have, and such as would be in the highest sense a blessing to the nation, until parents rise to a higher conception of their duties to their children than they do now. I am not thinking merely of their duty to send their children punctually and regularly to school. That is a very obvious duty, and yet a duty constantly neglected. What I want to ask is, Are parents careful to see that the example they set their children at home is a *Christian* example—is an example which will really help them to grow up in the knowledge and fear of the Lord, and in favour with God and man? The old heathens had very right notions about the way in which a child ought to be trained up. They had great belief in a pure domestic education. One of them said, "Let nothing unclean ever enter into the house where a little child is"—no drunken man, no quarrelling father or mother, no bad language, no careless, slovenly habits; le nothing of the sort be seen in the house where dwells the little child. A Roman poet has said, "The greatest possible reverence is due to a child." Some parents are extremely careless about what sort of things they say before their children. They seem to forget that the little children are listening, and that their characters are being formed by ten thousand insensible influences which surround them day by day.

Bishop of Manchester.

A MOTHER'S NOTES ON DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

On the whole, we are pleased to note that there is a much greater tendency to moderation in dress than has been shown for some time past, for in extremes of dress there is always some degree of vulgarity which mothers of refined taste will avoid. Dress skirts are being made somewhat narrower, and the sleeves less full. There is still a leaning towards the antique in most of the so-called new designs, for dresses, mantles, and even hair-dressing are but a revival of some style worn by our great-grandmothers. For instance, the Louis XV. coat is adapted for a lady's dress bodice, as also is the Anne of Austria bodice.

Fig. 43.

Ribbon is much used for trimming dress skirts, and varies in width from what is called baby ribbon to two or three inches wide. Bright colours are still fashionable, especially for dress trimmings.

Ladies' mantles long enough to cover the entire dress are made in shower-proof tweeds, and consist of a loose under-part and an over-cape finished with butterfly frills, or a hood. A pattern can be supplied, price 6½d.

Fig. 43. Here we show a dress suitable for a girl from six to ten years of age. The model looked much prettier than might be supposed from the illustration. The material employed was a sort of wide twill in cinnamon-brown colour, and the trimming was of a darker shade in silk. A V-shaped front is made with the silk, which is gathered on either side, and also in the centre, where a heading about an inch wide is left. This front is bordered with frills which go from the waist in front over the shoulders to the waist at the back, being wider on the shoulders and getting gradually narrower to the waist. The sleeve has two puffs with runnings between, and a little frill of silk at the wrist. The skirt has three narrow flounces set on with a narrow heading, and is lined throughout with sateen. It is set on to the body with gathers. A band of silk finishes the waist, and fastens under a rosette of silk.

Fig. 44.

Fig. 44 is a lady's nightdress, which can be made in longcloth or flannelette. We should like to recommend the latter material for winter wear, for both ladies and children. It is manufactured in many pretty patterns, both light and dark shades, most of which wash well. Longcloth may last longer, but flannelette washes more easily, and is certainly more comfortable to wear. The fronts of this nightdress are laid in narrow tucks, and the opening is trimmed with two frills of different width. A still wider frill is used for the sleeves and neck. Embroidery can take the place of material for these frills, if desired. When flannelette is used, feather stitching in coloured flourishing thread is a pretty and cheap way of trimming. Three and a half to four yards of material one yard wide will be required for a full-sized nightdress. The pattern can be sent in any size required.

Fig. 45.

Fig. 45. Here we show a simple design for a lady's afternoon apron. Delaine, crêpon, or, if black is preferred, brocaded alpaca or Italian cloth can be used; ribbon, velvet, or lace forming the trimming. The skirt is a good width, and is gathered into a plain band. The bib is crossed in front and fastens under two small bows of ribbon. If preferred, shoulder straps can be added, which will button on to the waistband at the back.

Fig. 46.

Fig. 46. This is a little boy's overall pinafore, suitable for wearing over a knickerbocker suit. Brown holland is the material used, and one and a quarter yards will be required. A crossway band, piped with blue or red cambric, is laid along the bottom, neck, and sleeves, and also as a stay for the button-holes.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Figs. 43 and 44, 6½d. each. Figs. 45 and 46, 4½d. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, E.C.

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